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RUNNING HEAD: Factors influencing coaching transitions

Coach Transitions: Influence of Interpersonal and Work Environment Factors

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Abstract

Each year many coaches leave their positions (e.g., experience transitions). This change can have damaging effects on athletes, sports programs, and coaches (O'Connor & Bennie, 2006; Raedeke, Warren, & Granzyk, 2002). Consequently, understanding the factors that influence coach transitions is pertinent. To address this need, two qualitative descriptive studies were conducted to examine the work-environment factors that influence coach transitions. In study one, 21 full-time, part-time, and volunteer coaches from across Canada participated in semi-structured interviews. Through a process of inductive content analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994), 10 lower-order themes describing reasons coaches transitioned between positions were identified. These 10 lower-order themes were grouped into four higher-order themes: 1) interpersonal considerations, 2) work demands, 3) career concerns, and 4) positive coaching experiences. Building on study one, study two sought to explicitly explore the positive and negative factors influencing transitions with a further 14 coaches. Following analysis, two overarching themes depicting reasons for transitions were identified: Seeking opportunities to be more successful or achieve more success, and leaving a negative or challenging work environment. These two overarching themes were underpinned by a further six higher-order themes. Overall, results indicated that there are various factors influencing coaches' transitions, and that such transitions can be motivated by positive factors (i.e., opportunities for career advancement), or negative factors (i.e., leaving an undesirable work environment). Findings highlight the importance of practitioners and sports organizations providing support to enable coaches to advance their career and also provide better support and strategies to optimize coaches' working environment.

Keywords: Career progression, transitions, coaches, work demands, support

Work environment factors influencing coaching transitions

Through their behavior and involvement, coaches have the potential to greatly influence athletes' sport experiences (Holt, 2008; Lyle, 2002). That is, coaches can affect individuals' long-term involvement in sport, the psychosocial outcomes associated with participation, and the success athletes achieve (e.g., Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2009; Gould, Collins, Lauer, & Chung, 2007). Given the important role coaches fulfill in sport, the recruitment and subsequent retention of good quality coaches to sports programs is vital (O'Connor & Bennie, 2006; Raedeke, Warren, & Granzyk, 2002). The importance of coach retention is particularly apparent when one considers that coaching competence and expertise are, at least to an extent, influenced by a coach's experience (Gilbert & Trudel, 2005).

When coaches leave a position, in addition to a possible loss of expertise, a range of undesirable effects for athletes, sports organizations, and for coaches themselves can ensue (O'Connor & Bennie, 2006; Raedeke et al., 2002; Rundle-Thiele & Auld, 2009). For example, it can also be a source of stress for athletes and a limiting factor in the development of a strong coach-athlete relationship (cf. Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2004; Ryan & Sagas, 2009). Movement between positions and organizations can have important financial implications for organizations and limit the opportunities and services they can provide (Cuskelly, 2004). Job transitions have also been identified as a stressor for the individuals involved in the transition (Rudisill & Edwards, 2002). For instance, when moving to a new position coaches might encounter challenges such as establishing trust with athletes and colleagues and implementing discipline procedures (Wang & Callahan, 1997). Consequently, for some coaches, movement between positions or out of the profession could negatively influence their psychological wellbeing (Wang & Callahan, 1997; Raedeke et al., 2002).

Unfortunately, over the past few decades a high turnover rate of sport coaches has been observed (O'Connor & Bennie, 2006; Raedeke, 2004). Despite such a turnover rate and

the potential consequences associated with coaches changing positions, there has been little examination of the various factors that influence such decisions (Raedeke et al., 2002; Rundle-Thiele & Auld, 2009). Understanding the factors that influence coaches' decisions to remain in or leave a coaching position might allow organizations to take steps to retain coaches (cf. Hackett, Lapierre & Hausdorf, 2001; Cooper-Haskim & Viswesvaran, 2005). As Pastore, Inglis, and Danylchuk (1996) posited, "the identification of retention factors may be useful for creating a work environment that encourages coaches and athletic managers to remain in their positions" (p. 443).

To date, much of our insight into factors that influence coach turnover has been gained from studies of coaching stress and burnout. For example, in a study of NCAA Division one coaches' stress experiences, Frey (2007) identified that sources of stress might contribute to coaches voluntarily quitting a position. Specifically, Frey identified that a loss of enjoyment, physical hardship, wanting more free time, losing consistently, and coaching interfering with family life were all reasons coaches would seek to leave the profession. Further studies of coaching stress have identified stressors such as concerns regarding athlete and staff performance, managing finances, dealing with criticisms, expectations and pressures, and competition outcomes (e.g., Chroni, Diakaki, Perkos, Hassandra, & Schoen, 2013; Olusoga, Butt, Maynard, & Hays, 2010; Thelwell, Weston, Greenlees, & Hutchings, 2008). These stressors are consistent with many of those that have been associated with coach burnout (Goodger, Gorely, Lavalley, & Harwood, 2009; Raedeke, 2004; Raedeke et al., 2002; Richards, Templin, Levesque-Bristol, & Blankenship, 2014).

However, it is too simple to assume that it is merely the presence or absence of stressors that dictates coach burnout or leads to coaches' leaving a position. Numerous other considerations might also influence coaches' decisions to change positions (Dawson & Phillips, 2013; Rundle-Thiele & Auld, 2013). For example, studies have indicated that time

demands were the most significant coaching cost (with coaching costs likely leading to transitions), followed by frustrations with athletes, a lack of administrative support, and external pressures (e.g., Knoppers, Meyers, Ewing, & Forrest, 1991; Weiss & Sisley, 1984; Weiss & Stevens, 1993). More recent studies of coach retention have reinforced these findings, identifying poor organizational support and systemic factors (such as coach education and accreditation quality) as reasons volunteer coaches will leave positions (Rundle-Thiele and Auld, 2009). Further, personal factors such as self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, work-family conflict, and differences in values between colleagues have also been identified as contributing factors to coach satisfaction, commitment, and turnover (Cunningham & Sagas, 2004; Ryan & Sagas, 2009).

Drawing the aforementioned literature together, it is clear that the decision to leave a coaching position is complex and likely to be influenced by multiple factors. One category that appears to be relatively consistent across all the literature is the influence of the work environment. That is, specific aspects of the environment in which coaches are working appear to influence whether they stay in or leave a position. This is consistent with the large body of literature examining employee retention and turnover in other sectors such as teaching, nursing, and human resources (e.g., Beercroft, Dorey, & Wenten, 2007; Kelloway & Day, 2005; Manion, 2004). Recognizing the influence of work environment on coach turnover, some researchers have examined the influence of specific work-environment factors on coach satisfaction and turnover intent (e.g., Allen & Shaw, 2009; Cunningham & Sagas, 2003, 2004; Pastore et al., 1996). Together, such studies have demonstrated the influence of leadership behaviors, inclusivity, value congruence, pay satisfaction, and work-family conflict on intentions to remain in coaching positions. Further, some important considerations for retaining female coaches, such as issues of exclusion and support, have been identified (Allen & Shaw, 2009).

Existing studies examining coaches' work-environments have provided invaluable insight into how certain work-environment factors influence coach retention or turnover. However, these studies have focused almost exclusively upon coaches working in the US College and University system, which likely limits the insights they provide regarding other work environments, including other varsity sport systems. Further, these studies have generally adopted a cross-sectional survey design, which has demonstrated the link between certain factors and coach turnover, but does not allow for exploration of coaches' experiences of these factors. Thus, the purpose of this research was to examine the work-environment factors that influence coaches' transitions (i.e., movement) between positions and explore how these factors affect coaches' decisions.

Two studies were conducted to address this purpose. The first study (study one) sought to identify how the work environment might influence the transitions of coaches in various positions. As anticipated based on previous literature, coaches identified many negative work-environment factors that encouraged them to leave their positions. However, coaches also highlighted the influence positive coaching experiences could have upon their desire to stay in a position and it appeared that a tension might exist between the influence of positive and negative work-environment factors upon coach transitions. The identification of positive and negative influences on coaching transitions highlighted an important gap within previous literature, which has generally focused upon the effect of a negative work-environment on transitions. Consequently, a second study (study two) was conducted to explicitly examine the extent to which positive and negative factors "push" and "pull" (Rundle- Thiele & Auld, 2009) coaches into different coaching positions.

Method

Methodology

A qualitative description approach was selected for the two studies. Qualitative description seeks to, “offer a comprehensive summary of an event in the everyday terms of those events” (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 336). In the current studies, the event being examined was coaching transitions and the aim of the study was to produce a descriptive summary of work environment factors that influence coaches’ decisions to change jobs or leave coaching. Beyond the general tenets of naturalistic inquiry, qualitative descriptive research has not been associated with any specific philosophic foundations (Sandelowski, 2000). However, Miles and Huberman’s (1994) data analysis techniques, which were utilized in this study, have been aligned with critical realism. Critical realism is founded upon the idea that social phenomena do not only exist in the human mind, but also in the objective world. Consequently, it is proposed that there are relatively stable patterns within and across these phenomena, and through research it is possible to identify the patterns that underpin social life and locate them within social structures. In this study, we sought to identify the patterns that underpinned the transitions our participants had experienced. Additionally, in seeking to identify these patterns we sought to explore the range of experiences participants had rather than assume that one objective truth exists. We recognize that the meaning each individual assigns to their experiences (and subsequently what they know to be true or real) is constructed based upon their actions and interactions and thus we aimed to explore the complexity of these views among the participants. Further, we acknowledge that the findings are a product of the collective knowledge of the different participants and the researchers.

Study One: Method

Participants

Participants were purposefully sampled in order to ensure information-rich cases. Specifically, maximum variation sampling was used. Maximum variation sampling has been identified as a salient sampling method for qualitative description because it enables the

production of a broad account of the phenomena under study (Sandelowski, 1995). Thus, coaches working at different levels (e.g., national, provincial, university, high-school, and community), in different types of positions (e.g., full-time including college/university, part-time, volunteer), and across different provinces in Canada were sought to provide a demographically diverse population. Participants who had transitioned between positions were specifically sought to ensure they could provide rich information to answer the study question.

In total, 21 coaches (six female and 15 male) from six provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Nova Scotia) participated. Coaches worked in a range of sports (3 in volleyball and hockey, 2 in basketball, soccer, and track and field and 1 in biathlon, curling, freestyle skiing, ringette, rugby, middle and long-distance running, sailing, soccer, synchronized swimming, and tennis). Seven of the coaches were current or former full-time coaches, nine of the coaches worked at universities, and five coaches were volunteers. Coaches had between five and 30 years of experience ($M=16.5$ years, $SD= 7.37$).

Procedure

Prior to conducting this study, institutional research ethics board approval was obtained. Next, potential participants were identified from a database of coaches who had, in a previous survey examining the status of coaches' in Canada (i.e., the number of coaches working in Canada, the positions they were in, and the education of coaches), indicated that they had transitioned between positions (thus fulfilling the sampling criteria) and had indicated willingness to participate in future research studies. Potential participants were sent an e-mail outlining the study and inquiring into their interest and availability to take part in the study. Interested participants were asked to contact a member of the research team, who then scheduled a convenient time to conduct an interview. Although potential participants had

1 previously indicated that they were interested in participating in research studies, they were
2 reminded that they were under no obligation to participate.

3 **Data Collection.** Consistent with a qualitative description approach, data were
4 collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using content analysis
5 (Sandelowski, 2000). Due to the geographical locations of the participants, interviews were
6 conducted over the telephone. One researcher, who has extensive experience in conducting
7 qualitative research within the sports domain, conducted all interviews. Prior to conducting
8 the interviews, a pilot interview was conducted to ensure the suitability of the interview guide
9 and to provide the interviewer had an opportunity to become familiar with the questions. No
10 changes were made to the interview guide as a result of the pilot interview. The interview
11 guide was developed based on previous literature examining coaching stress and burnout
12 (e.g., Goodger et al., 2009) and the work-environment (e.g., Hackett et al., 2001). The
13 interview guide followed the structure recommended by the Rubin and Rubin (2012),
14 whereby the interviews started with introductory questions, followed by main questions, and
15 finished with summary questions. The interview guide is available from the first author.

16 At the outset of the interview, participants were reminded all information was
17 confidential, participation was voluntary, and there were no right or wrong answers.
18 Participants had an opportunity to ask any questions and provided consent to participate in an
19 interview. Participants were then asked to provide specific demographic information, such as
20 their age, years of experience, and their qualifications. Following gathering demographic
21 information, questions shifted to focusing on coaches' experiences of transitions. Specifically,
22 coaches were asked to indicate how many times they had transitioned, what their reasons for
23 transitioning were, and to provide a brief overview of how they felt about their transitions
24 (i.e., did they have positive or negative consequences). The main questions then focused
25 explicitly upon the influence the work-environment had on participants' transitions. For

example “Can you describe the transition from your previous coaching position to this job?” and regarding the previous position “Describe the interpersonal relationships you had with others in the organization, including supervisors”. The interview ended with “Are you more satisfied with your current position than the one you left (that we are talking about)?” Interviews ranged in length from 20-40 minutes (with additional time spent obtaining demographic information), and produced 145 pages of single-spaced text.

Data Analysis. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and names were replaced with numerical codes to ensure confidentiality. The transcripts were then read and re-read by two members of the research team to ensure immersion in the data. Both members of the research team then analyzed the transcripts independently. Data analysis progressed in a series of steps, as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994). First the transcripts were coded to reduce the data. Through this process, meaningful information or units of data were identified and allocated codes. Initially descriptive codes, which simply described the information, were developed. Interpretive codes, which include some interpretation of the data, were then developed. Finally, pattern codes, which are explanatory and demonstrate links between descriptive and pattern codes we created. This process resulted in the identification of a number of higher- and lower-order themes. Throughout this coding process, data were subjected to constant comparison. Thus, when new (or seemingly new) codes were identified during the analysis process, these codes were compared to previously analyzed transcripts and additional codes were allocated to previously analyzed transcripts as necessary.

Following data reduction, in line with Miles and Huberman’s (1994) procedures, data displays, specifically data matrices, were produced. Data matrices are tables in which the coded data from each participant are collected and compared. Through this process, patterns across the participants can be identified. Conclusions regarding the data were then generated and these conclusions were then confirmed by again reviewing the participants’ transcripts.

Methodological Rigor

It is acknowledged that, due to the different conceptions of qualitative research, to assess the quality of all qualitative research against a specific set of criteria is constraining (Sparkes & Smith, 2009). Thus, rather than seeking to adhere to specific “qualitative research quality criteria” we integrated a number of steps during data collection and analysis (cf., Morse et al., 2002) to enhance the methodological rigor of this study and ensure it appropriately fulfilled the components of a qualitative descriptive study. First, the interviewer conducted pilot interviews prior to starting the study. In conducting the pilot interviews the interviewer could ensure she was familiar with the interview guide and was familiar with the type of answers she might receive, thus helping her to probe answers fully and ensure she obtained rich data (cf., Tracy 2010). The research team also reviewed the pilot interviews to ensure the data obtained would answer the research questions and would produce results that sports organizations could easily understand and apply. The ease of use of results is particularly important in qualitative descriptive research because the purpose of such research is to obtain “straight and largely unadorned answers to questions of special relevance to practitioners and policy makers” (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 337)

During data collection, extensive memos were recorded regarding the data and researcher reflections were recorded. These memos and reflections provided an important audit trail for the research team when they were reviewing the decisions made during the data analysis and also ensure the interviewer was reflecting upon her pre-concieved biases and values, which might have been influencing her questioning or interpretation of the results (Tracy, 2010). In raising awareness of these ideas and reflecting upon them, the interviewer, along with the rest of the research team, could question the allocation of data to themes and explore different interpretations of the data. Finally, the findings were shared with the rest of the research team who acted as critical friends, questioning the allocation of codes to data and

the production of themes to ensure themes were adequately explained and developed. Four members of the team comprised the critical friends. Of particular importance during this process of critiquing the results was ensuring the findings would make sense to organizations that might want to act upon them.

Study One: Results

Data analysis led to the identification of 10 lower-order themes describing reasons coaches transitioned between positions or remained in a position. These categories were grouped into four higher-order themes: 1) Interpersonal considerations, 2) work demands, 3) career concerns, and 4) positive coaching experiences. These themes are described below and presented in tabular form as supplementary material.

Interpersonal Considerations

Interpersonal considerations encapsulate any factors related to interactions with others that influenced coaches' decisions to remain or leave a position. Two themes, one relating to issues with supervisors and colleagues in the organization¹ and the other relating to interactions with athletes and parents, underpinned this higher-order theme. Although these themes were generally discussed separately, when coaches talked about issues with parents, they sometimes made reference to the support they received from their supervisor. Thus, the extent to which coaches' perceived they had positive relationships with, and support from their supervisors could influence their reaction to negative parent interactions.

Relationships with supervisor and colleagues. Coaches explained that the extent to which they felt supported and appreciated by their supervisors and colleagues influenced the extent to which they chose to stay in or leave a position. For example, the reason one coach had left his coaching position was, "having the feeling after eight years of service of not being

¹ Coaches used a variety of words to describe the individual to whom they reported. For the purpose of this paper, the term supervisor has been selected because it was the most frequently used by participants. Similarly, coaches described the organization they worked for

1 appreciated [by my supervisor] at full value.” Another coach explained that he had left a
2 position because his supervisor did not support his vision for the program. He said:

3 I want results, but the set-up, the environment is that, oh, you try your best; if you
4 succeed, you succeed. Where sometimes I’m at odds with them [my supervisor],
5 because “What do you mean we can’t go up the night before? We need to set up the
6 athletes in the performance environment. We have to go up the night before.” And
7 they’re saying, “No, you can go up the same day. Just try your best.”

8 In contrast, one coach explained how a positive relationship with her supervisor had made the
9 decision to leave a position very challenging. She said, “One of my best friends was my boss
10 at that point [when she was deciding to leave]...you know I had a great support network...so
11 it [deciding to leave] was an awful decision.”

12 When considering the relationships coaches had with supervisors, organizational
13 stability appeared to be particularly important. Coaches explained that frequent changes
14 within the organization, particularly at the leadership level, could influence their decisions to
15 leave positions. As one coach said, a contributing factor to his leaving his position was, “The
16 big energy drain from constantly changing [supervisors], having all different kinds of
17 personalities come through the positions.”

18 **Relationships with athletes and parents.** The quality of relationships with athletes
19 and parents was identified as particularly important in influencing whether coaches remained
20 in or left a position. Specifically, it appeared positive relationships between coaches and
21 athletes would encourage coaches to remain in a position. One coach explained he stayed in a
22 position because, “you enjoy it and it’s fun and there are moments with your athletes and with
23 your team when you have fun and to share that with them is rewarding.” In contrast, negative
24 relationships or interactions with athletes or parents were associated with coaches seeking

different positions. For example, one coach explained that she had left a position due to the negative communication she received from parents. She described the situation:

I'm also dealing with the 12 – 13 year olds and...I find that they'll take things literally, or they'll hear you say something and then they'll internalize it and say something else that I didn't say. And then they talk to other kids, and then other kids talk to their parents, and then next thing you know you get this e-mail saying 'I'd like to have a meeting with you, 'cause apparently you said something in the dressing room', so yeah really tough.

Work Demands

Coaches indicated that the specific demands associated with a coaching position, and the consequences that arose due to these demands, would influence their job transitions. Specifically, coaches explained that their workload, the type of work, and the challenges of balancing family and coaching commitments would affect whether they stayed or left a specific position. Although these themes are presented separately, it should be acknowledged that coaches often discussed these together so they do appear to be interrelated.

Workload. Coaches spent considerable time discussing their workload, and for some, this discussion was focused on a perception that their workload was too large. As one coach explained, "There's far too many demands put on you as a coach, or that you have to try to oversee, that really you shouldn't necessarily have to." However, for these coaches it did not appear that it was simply the quantity of work that would influence potential transitions. Rather, coaches explained that they would consider changing positions when they perceived their workload was influencing the quality of their coaching. For example, one coach said she had considered leaving her current position because, "I just feel sometimes overwhelmed dealing with 90 athletes and not really being able to do as good a job as I would like because I

1 can't deal with the individuals when there's that many of them." Another coach shared similar
2 thoughts, stating:

3 I feel like there should be somebody in our office telling us, "ok, you need another
4 assistant coach to get everything done?" "well, this is here, and this is available"
5 ...because the bottom line is I'm going to be doing my job, which is the hands-on
6 coaching, and I miss these additional things I'm meant to do.

7 **Work type.** Coaches described two types of tasks in their jobs: performance
8 enhancement tasks (e.g., coaching at competitions, delivering training sessions) and
9 administrative tasks (e.g., organizing transport, fundraising). It appeared that the amount of
10 time coaches had to commit to administrative tasks would encourage them to leave a job. For
11 example, when explaining why he decided to leave a position, one coach said he realized, "I
12 could do more coaching, actual X's and O's on the field; I could do more coaching and less
13 people management, like less dressing room issues, less moodiness issues..." Issues relating
14 to work type appeared to be exacerbated when coaches perceived they received a lack of
15 support for tasks outside of coaching (i.e. tasks that were not focused on performance), as one
16 coach explained:

17 The biggest complaint with this is that in some of the areas outside of coaching that
18 are responsibilities, from like the fundraising portion in particular, there isn't enough
19 of a collaborative effort to help ... I'm sort of left to do it on my own, and in fact do it
20 on my own, but maybe with just some road blocks at the departmental level.

21 **Balancing family and coaching commitments.** Coaches described challenges with
22 balancing the commitments of their family and their coaching job. As one coach said:

23 Lifestyle! Questions with family, with partners, or just being away from home and
24 friends, all that is definitely something of high impact and in high performance, like in

national team coaching in [name of sport], there's not many coaches who actually endure many years on that level.

If this balance became too difficult to maintain, it could result in coaches' leaving a position. For example, even when he was offered some help, one coach still left a position because he could not manage his workload and his family commitments. He explained, "They offered if there was anything else they could do to help me, 'do we need to be out there, recruiting for you?' That sort of thing, but it's not that stuff, it's because my kids have become number 1."

However, other coaches who did not perceive any issue with their overall workload described difficulties related to balancing their family and coaching commitments due to the time of coaching sessions (e.g., usually evenings and weekends) clashing with their children's and families commitments. For example, this was illustrated when one coach described the his thoughts regarding leaving a position, "Yeah, there were some more desires to—my kids are now 13 and 10 and they're starting to get very involved in sport and I never had any evenings to spend with them, so that was another reason." Similarly, the amount of travel associated with coaching also made it difficult to fulfill family commitments, and consequently was a consideration for coaches regarding leaving a position, as a coach explained, "I have two young kids. It sounds romantic; it sounds exciting, but it's a pain. You know, you're in Spain and stuff's happening at home that you're missing."

Career Concerns

Career concerns accounts for specific factors related to career progression or recognition that might influence a coaches' movement between positions. This higher-order theme comprised three lower-order themes labeled job security, compensation, and opportunities for career advancement (with the latter two themes only being recalled by full-time and university coaches).

1 **Job security.** Coaches indicated that job security, or perceived job security, which
2 resulted from having an extended contract or being employed by an organization (as opposed
3 to being self-employed), would be a reason for moving jobs. For example, a tennis coach who
4 had been self-employed but now worked for a sports organization explained one of the
5 reasons for the move:

6 The other thing is that it's [working for an organization rather than being self-
7 employed] much more safe, so if the coach and the player have a falling out, the
8 player's not necessarily your boss, or the athlete's not your boss and so they can't just
9 say 'okay we're done'. The association is your boss so there's more protection there.
10 In contrast, a lack of job security was seen to influence the commitment coaches could make
11 to athletes, negatively influence the quality of their coaching and was subsequently a reason
12 coaches' might look for different positions. A coach explained:

13 There's never been more than one-year contracts given for whatever reason... so when
14 you're really walking on eggshells every year in terms of whether or not you're going
15 to be re-signed the following year it makes it difficult and if you're trying to convince
16 players to come to the program ... I find it difficult to make promises to players when
17 I don't know 100% if I'm going to be back or not.

18 **Compensation.** Coaches indicated that they did not perceive they received sufficient
19 compensation (either in terms of their salary or benefits) for the job they did. As one coach
20 said, "Part of me feels that because I take care of our student athletes, and making them better
21 ambassadors and better in the working world, it's frustrating to not be compensated." This
22 lack of compensation was provided as a reason coaches had left a position. For example, one
23 coach simply stated he left his position due to, "Travel, time, money... All of those."
24 However, when considering compensation, coaches did not appear to consider salary alone.
25 Rather, coaches compared their salary to their workload. As one coach explained when

1 talking about why he left a position, “the workload there definitely does continue to increase
2 ... and we just weren’t given more time to do it or compensation for that.”

3 **Opportunities for career advancement.** Coaches indicated they had left or were
4 likely to leave a position when there were opportunities for career advancement, including
5 having opportunities to work with higher-level athletes (e.g., provincial or national level
6 athletes) or in more prestigious positions (e.g., working for sports organizations or at national
7 training centers). For example, one coach had changed jobs because, “Well, one, it’s a
8 prestige factor, so you’re basically working in the upper echelon of the sport within Canada.”
9 Other coaches indicated the desire for new challenges:

10 It was more of a challenge. I thought it was another step up in terms of where I was
11 going to, at the time, go as a coach, so it was more because of that. It was a stepping
12 stone, I think, more than anything, because as far as the level of athlete goes, I was
13 already coaching that level of athlete, so it was more the opportunity that was there
14 and of course the pay as well, but more of the stepping stone capacity.

15 Additionally, a number of coaches indicated transitioning out of coaching into higher-level
16 administrative positions with sport organizations to further their career.

17 **Positive Coaching Experiences**

18 Coaches indicated that having positive experiences in their position would prevent
19 them from leaving a position. Specifically, coaches discussed the influence enjoying their role
20 and achieving success in their position had upon the likelihood of transitioning.

21 **Enjoying the process of coaching.** A number of coaches talked about the enjoyment
22 they experienced coaching in their current position. For example, one coach said:

23 I know I’m very appreciative of what I have at the university because I leave in the
24 mornings or in the afternoons, whenever, I do not have the reflex to say, “I’m going to
25 work.” In ten years I haven’t said, “I’m going to work.” I go to practice, I go to games,

1 I've got to go to university, but I'm never thinking at all, "Man, I've got to go to
2 work" and that's priceless.

3 When coaches experienced such enjoyment from their work, even if other factors might be
4 challenging, coaches indicated they were unlikely to look for another position. A coach said:

5 The enjoyment that I've gathered from coaching the women and coaching the young
6 girls and watching them develop from young women up until they went away to
7 university was certainly payment enough, like I said, I did it for eight years without
8 getting compensated for it. It was just a pleasure to be able to interact with them and to
9 be able to teach these girls something. My thought was always as long as they feel I
10 can still teach them something, I'm willing to do it.

11 **Achieving success in a position.** Enjoyment of the coaching process was often related
12 to the success in their position, as a coach said, "Well first of all, my favorite part—well,
13 there's two things. One is seeing people, young people, develop and mature away from the
14 sport. And the other is improving as an athlete and getting better." Coaches defined success
15 differently, but often included seeing athletes develop or creating a winning program. For
16 example, when explaining why she stayed in her current job, one coach explained:

17 The kids and learning and when something clicks. When you give them a drill and you
18 don't tell them the full extent of why you're doing it and then you look at the game
19 and they're actually putting it into place and you never told them, you just put it out
20 there.

21 Similarly, another coach explained why he would not leave his current program:

22 It would be leaving a program which I've developed over the last 11 years, not only
23 the players that have gone through, but my name is on that program. When I took it
24 over, it was a fledgling program that was doing very poorly... we've been able to

1 make it an extremely competitive program and one that succeeds on an annual basis at
2 all levels, and I think that would be one of the tough things to leave.

3 **Study one: Discussion**

4 This study revealed a number of important factors relating to the work-environment
5 that influenced coaches' decisions to remain in a position or transition to another one.
6 Consistent with previous literature (e.g., Goodger et al., 2009; O'Connor & Bennie, 2006),
7 coaches frequently discussed how interpersonal considerations could greatly influence their
8 satisfaction with a position and consequently whether they would stay or leave. Thus, in
9 summary coaches appear to be more likely to leave, or consider leaving a position where they
10 do not feel supported or appreciated by their supervisor, athletes, and parents. Given that
11 many of the coaches were working with young adult athletes (e.g., students or older), it is
12 perhaps surprising that parents appeared to have such an influence upon coaches' experiences.
13 Given such an extended, negative, influence of parents, it appears particularly pertinent that
14 supervisors endeavor to ensure coaches receive support in their interactions with parents.

15 Coaches also noted that when they have too many different tasks to do, it negatively
16 influences their performance enhancement activities, and this might prompt a decision to
17 leave. The issues of workload have been consistently identified as a stressor for coaches, and
18 a potential contributing factor to burnout (e.g., Lundkvist, Gustafsson, Hjälml, & Hassmén
19 (2012). However, as evidenced in this study, heavy workload is likely to have a complex
20 influence on decisions to stay or leave. The current results suggest the overall type of the
21 work, the relationship of workload to performance, as well as the influence workload has
22 upon family, and perceptions of compensation relative to workload, combine to influence
23 career decisions. As such, it would appear that rather than simply attempting to reduce
24 workload, organizations should ensure they attempt to understand the complex interactions
25 between various work environment factors when attempting to retain coaches.

Further, it is clear that coaches' decisions to leave positions are not only stimulated by negative factors (Dawson & Phillips, 2013; Rundle-Thiele & Auld, 2009). Rather, it was apparent that coaches could also be encouraged to stay in certain positions when they have positive experiences. In this study, two specific positive experiences were identified – enjoying the coaching process and achieving success in a position. Both enjoyment and success have been identified as motives for engaging in coaching (O'Connor & Bennie, 2006; Raedeke et al., 2002) and thus, it is understandable they might act to retain coaches in certain position. In fact, for the coaches in this study, it emerged that if these two positive factors were sufficiently present they could act as a moderator of negative experiences, appearing to buffer the effect negative factors could have on coaches' experiences.

While study one pointed to the influence positive factors could have upon retaining coaches within certain positions, it was unclear whether such positive factors could also attract coaches to different positions. In their study of retention among youth AFL coaches, Rundle-Thiele and Auld (2009) made the distinction between factors that pushed coaches out of jobs (e.g., encouraged them to leave) and those factors that pulled coaches to remain in positions. Based on the findings of study one it might be assumed that positive coaching experiences pull coaches into positions and the other work-environment factors push coaches out of positions. However, taking Rundle-Thiele and Auld's distinction between "push" and "pull" factors, the question was posed as to whether those factors that encourage a coach to remain in a position could also work to pull a coach towards another position (e.g., could the potential of positive coaching experiences pull a coach to a new position if they are not currently having a positive experience?). With this question in mind, it was decided that a second study to more explicitly examine these potential "pull" factors was warranted. As such, the purpose of study two was to examine the factors that both "push" and "pull" (Rundle- Thiele & Auld, 2009) into different positions.

Study 2: Method

Participants

Participants were purposefully sampled based on three criteria: (a) they were current or former full-time coaches; or coaching was a major component of their job (and a part of their job evaluation), such as university or high-school coaches; (b) they had experienced at least one transition in their coaching career, and; (c) worked with athletes at a provincial or national level. These sampling criteria were used to ensure the participants would be information-rich cases who would be able to provide detailed information pertaining to the research coach. Potential participants were identified by recommendations based on the criteria. In total, 14 coaches (none of whom were part of study 1) participated in study two. Eleven participants were male and three were female. This aligns with the proportion of male and female coaches in Canada (Reade and Washington, 2013). Participants were aged between 25 and 60 years ($M = 43.36$ yrs, $S.D = 10.53$). Participants coached or had coached basketball ($n = 5$), speed skating ($n = 2$), cycling ($n = 1$), figure skating ($n = 1$), snowboarding ($n = 1$), freestyle skiing ($n = 1$), Canadian football ($n = 1$), hockey ($n = 1$), and volleyball ($n = 1$). Participants were located in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. An overview of the career paths of the participants is provided in Table 1.

Procedure

Institutional research ethics board approval was obtained and an email was sent to potential participants fulfilling the sampling criteria. Potential participants were identified based on their answers to a previous survey examining coaching in Canada conducted by this research group. On receipt of the e-mail, participants were asked to contact a member of the research team who organized an appropriate time to conduct an interview. Data collection and analysis then followed the same steps as study one.

Data collection. Prior to conducting the interviews ethical information pertaining to the study was reviewed and all participants provided oral consent. Prior to conducting these interviews, two pilot interviews. Where feasible (n=7) interviews were conducted in person. However due to logistical constraints some interviews (n=7) were conducted by phone. The interview guide was developed based on the findings of study one and previously reviewed work-environment and coaching literature. Specifically, the interview started with introductory questions such as, “How long have you been coaching?” and “Tell me about how you first got involved in coaching.” These summary questions were followed by transition questions, such as “Over your coaching career, how many positions have you had?” “Please provide details regarding these positions,” “Of these positions, was there one you particularly enjoyed? What was it you enjoyed?” and “Of these positions, was there one you found particularly challenging? What was it you found challenging?” The interview was then focused on three main questions and numerous probes. The main questions focused upon the reasons for transition from different positions, the factors that would have encouraged individuals to stay in a position, and the specific work-environment of their current position. The interview ended with summary questions, which included, “To review, over the course of your career what have been your main reasons for transitioning between positions?” and “What have been the main reasons you have remained in certain positions?” The full interview guide is available from the first author. The same person conducted all the interviews, which ranged in length from 36 – 81 minutes and produced 371 pages of data.

Data analysis. Following the same procedures as study one, data analysis occurred following the steps outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994). That is, all interviews were transcribed verbatim and transcripts were read and re-read by the lead author. Following this, data was reduced through the production of descriptive, interpretive, and pattern codes. These

codes were then entered into data displays to allow for comparison across the codes.

Conclusions were then drawn regarding the data.

Methodological Rigor. Following the same procedures as Study 1, a number of steps were integrated during and following data collection and analysis to enhance the methodological rigor of the study. Additionally, data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously, to ensure that data collection continued until rich descriptions of all themes had been obtained. Based upon these steps and the presented results, we have attempted to demonstrate an adherence to producing a quality qualitative descriptive study.

Study Two: Results

Analysis of the interviews conducted in study two led to the identification of two higher-order themes highlighting why coaches would transition between coaching positions. The first theme encapsulates transitions resulting from coaches seeking to work within an environment that would provide more opportunities for success. The second theme accounts for transitions that arose because coaches wished to leave a negative or challenging work environment. **These themes are presented in tabular form within the supplementary material.**

Seeking Opportunities to be More Successful or Achieve More Success

Coaches spoke about moving from one position to another position as they attempted to advance their careers, achieve greater levels of success, and reach higher levels within the coaching profession. For example, when summarizing the reasons for her transitions, one coach explained, “It’s a step up, right, to go from, you know college² to now a smaller university and then to a bigger university.” Another coach explained that all his transitions had, “always been opportunity based, like wanting to move onwards and upwards.”

² In Canada, Universities and Colleges compete in separate leagues and have different access to funding. Universities in general have larger budgets for sport and compete at a higher

When looking to advance their careers, a number of work-environment factors were seen as pertinent to making the decision to move. These factors were: 1) access to resources, 2) enhanced support from supervisors and the broader organization, and 3) better compensation. Coaches perceived these factors, either together or independently, contributed to a working environment where they could be more successful and work with higher-level athletes.

Access to resources. When discussing opportunities for moving forward in their career and being more successful, coaches indicated that access to more and better resources was pertinent. As one coach explained in relation to his latest move:

If you're fortunate enough to have a head coaching position for a number of years and then you decide to switch jobs, it's probably gonna be to a better scenario...A university that has more resources and is historically successful. Uh just by the nature of things some universities it's easier to be successful at the, they're larger, they have better academics, it's easier to recruit athletes to, athlete, young athletes know the name of the program and want to play there.

Coaches listed a range of resources that would encourage them to consider changing positions, including better facilities and equipment, or opportunities for training. However, it appeared that access to funding – both in terms of their own operational budget and the overall budget of the organizations – was seen as particularly important. As one coach explained, “Money’s always going to be a driving force of what can you do, what can’t you do.” Such funding was seen as particularly pertinent because coaches thought it helped them to attract and retain athletes. One coach explained:

I think a big part of it [the move to a more successful program] was just the ability to recruit athletes so you could build a program. Right, you could build a better program. They had more money for sure, they had better facilities for sure.”

Enhanced support from supervisors and others in the organization. When coaches considered moving forwards in their coaching careers, the amount of support they would receive from their new organization appeared pertinent. For example, one coach explained they had moved jobs simply to, “be in a program that was run by a very knowledgeable and fair manager.” Coaches discussed various types of support (e.g., financial, facilities, emotional) that would encourage them to change positions. However, access to administrative support (e.g., staff to help them fundraise, recruit athletes, or conduct administrative tasks) appeared particularly appealing to coaches. For example, one coach explained, “I weighed out the pros and cons and some of the main reasons that I actually chose to make the transition was because I had an administrator. The managerial support that I get now is much better.”

In addition to such tangible administrative support it appeared coaches were also enticed by the opportunity to work with supervisors who they perceived to be supportive. For example, when describing a position she remained in, one coach said:

The faculty was very supportive of it, and ... [name of supervisor] was a really good, he was a good guy, very supportive, he was at all the games, you know you could talk to him about anything... If issues came up I think a big part of it is, ‘cause there’s always issues right, things happen and just knowing that person has your back is a big part of it.

By providing such support, coaches perceived their supervisor understood and appreciated them and this allowed them to focus their efforts on tasks they viewed as important for coaching success (e.g., the performance enhancement tasks) rather than worrying what their supervisor was thinking. One coach explained the benefits of being in her current organization, “they [the administration] have a lot of trust in their coaches, they let us do, not whatever we want, they hold us accountable, we have to show them where we are going ... but after that [they leave us].”

Better compensation. When seeking to progress in their career, coaches moved to positions that were better paid. As one coach described, “It’s no different than any job, you wanna work your way up, work your way up, work your way up into more responsibility, which hopefully equals more pay.” For coaches working within institutions (e.g., University coaches), compensation did not appear to be as pertinent to changing positions. However, for coaches working for sports organizations this was an important reason for taking a new job, as such a coach explained, “The job was attractive to me on a couple levels, like it was better money than I’d ever made, I was gonna be doing more skiing and travelling.” The difference in the importance placed on compensation might be indicative of starting salaries, with many of the coaches working for sports organizations indicating that they initially worked for very little pay. For example, one coach who had over 20 years experience working for an organization said, “And it’s been probably the last 10 years, well, maybe eight years, that I feel like I’m making what I’m worth.”

Leaving a Negative or Challenging Work Environment

In contrast to moving to further their career, other coaching transitions were underpinned by a desire to leave a negative or challenging work environment. The motives for these transitions appeared to be very different to those described in the aforementioned higher-order theme because rather than focusing on their future work environment, coaches were motivated by a need to leave their current environment, often appearing to give little thought to the environment they were entering. As one coach explained, she had left a position because, “It just came to a head and I was starting to suffer emotionally and mentally and recognized that and decided to make some changes.” Such a negative environment appeared to be characterized by a perceived lack of support from their supervisor, negative relationships with athletes and parents and a poor balance between workload and compensation.

1 **Inadequate support from supervisor and other coaches.** An issue raised by coaches
2 who left their position due to a negative work-environment was a perceived lack of support
3 from or conflict with their supervisor. As one coach explained:

4 “The reason why I quit at [name of university] was that the Athletic Director and I just
5 didn’t see eye to eye at all, he was, I think he was incompetent... And I went to the
6 Central Administration they wouldn’t do anything about it so that’s why I left.”

7 Coaches shared various stories regarding how they had been let down by their supervisors
8 because they had not supported them in challenging situations. For example, one coach had
9 some issues with officials, and as he said:

10 I asked for him [his supervisor] to advocate on my behalf, I said you know I’m getting
11 this technical foul, this is all I did...and I even took a voluntary game suspension for
12 getting a technical foul, and all he said was, ‘Well you can’t get technical fouls.’”

13 In such situations, when supervisors “did not have their back,” coaches indicated not feeling
14 valued, appreciated, or understood and consequently, as one coach described, “I made the
15 choice to leave at that point because I just didn’t want to work in an environment where I
16 wasn’t being supported.”

17 Coaches also indicated that a lack of interaction with or support from other coaches in
18 the organization or sport could result in a lack of enjoyment in the coaching position. For
19 example, a contributing factor to one coach leaving his position was, “I spent a significant
20 amount of time with the coaching staff and I didn’t enjoy or believe in those people, I
21 couldn’t be around them.” Coaches also indicated that direct disagreements with colleagues,
22 resulting from incompatible coaching philosophies could result in negative environments and
23 seeking other opportunities. A coach who had recently left an organization explained:

24 Then there are also sometimes, it’s interesting, within coaching, fights within—it
25 could be within coach’s training groups, different teams, outside the competitive, of

course there you have to fight for the win or the podium or a good placing, but it is more the ego between individuals and maybe thinking they're the ones who know everything and are the best and only their system works—all those are things that can be detrimental to having enjoyment in coaching.

Negative relationships with athletes and athletes' parents. Coaches indicated that negative relationships with athletes or their parents had caused them to leave positions. One coach described her reasons for leaving a position, explaining, "I just decided with all the hassle of all these parents and I just felt at that point in time I wanted to win more than the kids did that I was coaching." In contrast, a number of coaches explained they had stayed in positions because of the athletes. One coach explained, "Well it [relationships with athletes] was everything because that's what, that was the, your reward, it was that relationship, that connection that you're making with those athletes."

Coaches' also shared a number of stories relating to issues they had encountered with parents and how these issues had encouraged them to leave certain positions. As one coach said, she left because of "the constant parent abuse." Another coach explained, "I had an interesting experience with a couple of parents and you know whatever, so I was eligible for a year off, a sabbatical type thing, so I took a year off." Still further, one coach highlighted why coaches left the organization she worked in, "coaches leave because the politics get too much for them and they just can't handle it, 'cause you deal with a lot of parents, and the parents are duly invested."

Balance between workload and compensation. Some coaches indicated that they accepted the workload associated with their job, perceiving it to be an inherent part of coaching. As one coach said, "If you're getting paid as a fulltime coach, your workload is just, it's heavy...I mean because of where our resourcing is...so if you have to put in 15 hours a day, that's what you have to put in." However, for some, workload was seen as something

that could contribute to a negative work-environment and lead to coaches wanting to leave the profession. As one coach simply said, "I was putting a lot of miles on my car and I had almost burnt out on travel," and another said, "all the coaches have to put in way more. Well, I was told to only put in 48 hours a week, but I'm sure that I was working way more, like 60 hours a week." Specifically, it appeared that workload could become an issue when coaches' perceived they were not adequately compensated relative to this workload. For example, when explaining why he left his position, one participant said:

At some point it's like you take a step back and like whoa, wait a second there, this is all great I say but you know what I'm putting way more time, I'm getting way more pressure, there's way more accountability, way more everything, and I'm just barely making a little bit more than I was making 10 years ago (P11).

The balance between workload and compensation appeared particularly important for coaches who had been in the profession for a while and had increased family commitments and thus desired more compensation to provide for their family (this issue was raised both male and female coaches). As one coach explained, he left his job because, "They tried to keep me but like before I had to have a really significant change in compensation level and I didn't so I had to make the decision for my family."

Study Two: Discussion

The purpose of study two was extensively examine the factors that both "push" and "pull" (Rundle- Thiele & Auld, 2009) coaches into different positions. This research was novel in it's focus to explicitly explore the factors that might entice coaches into positions along with pushing them away from positions. Generally, the results of the study showed two important factors contributing to career transitions. First, career progression is a major factor influencing coaches' career decisions. This is a positive factor, and can be managed by supervisors, organizations, and practitioners. However, as Dawson and Phillips (2013)

highlighted, there is currently very little policy support in place to aid the career development of coaches. Given that importance placed upon career development by the coaches, such a lack of guidance for career development appears short-sighted. A number of the coaches in this study discussed moving positions to progress their career but also highlighted that they had moved or had considered moving out of an active coaching role into an administrative role because these roles were perceived to be more prestigious, associated with more favourable work conditions, and/or better compensation. Consequently, experienced coaches are being lost from coaching due to a lack of options for career development. Perhaps some organizations should not expect to 'keep' young, ambitious coaches, and should plan to be an effective stopping point and to support the career development of coaches. However, developing strategies to enable career development at the top of the coaching scale is clearly required to retain coaches.

In addition to positive aspects such as coaches striving for career advancement, participants also discussed various negative conditions that will hasten the departure from positions. If organizations are seeking stability for their athletes and programs, it is clear that these factors will need addressing. Job dissatisfaction prompts coaches to look for other positions, regardless of their career stage or plans (e.g., Cunningham & Sagas, 2004). In this study, it appeared that job dissatisfaction arose when coaches perceived low support from their supervisors or organization, when coaches encountered interpersonal difficulties with supervisors or parents, or when there was a perceived imbalance between compensation and workload. While these factors are consistent with previous burnout and coach turnover literature (e.g., Goodger et al., 2007; Rundle-Thiele & Auld, 2009), they are perhaps more specific and interrelated than identified in previous studies. In describing these factors, coaches struggled to distinguish many of these ideas and it was clear that it was unlikely one thing alone that would trigger a decision to leave and thus, simply changing one factor is

likely to be insufficient to retain coaches. Thus it might be beneficial for practitioners to work with organizations to help them unpick the complexity of coaches' experiences and subsequently enhance the structure and support they provide to coaches.

General Discussion and Conclusion

Coaches are highly trained individuals working with athletes of all ages and abilities in contexts ranging from community recreation, to school and intramural competition, to elite ranks of competition. Coaches have tremendous impact on children and adolescents and are frequently entrusted with producing international competitive results foundational to a country's pride and identity. Yet, little is understood about the work environment of coaches, and how it might be contributing to coaches' job satisfaction and career progression. The current studies offer novel evidence of different factors that might push and pull coaches out of positions and consequently provides suggestions for practitioners and organizations to aid in the retention of coaches.

When considering the findings of this study, both studies incorporate important tenets from a range of theories utilised within sport psychology. For example, when considering the importance coaches placed on their relationships with their supervisor, colleagues, athletes, and parents, along with the need for supervisors to support coaches as they follow their own coaching philosophies, and their desire to be associated with a successful programme, there appears to be strong overlap with Self-determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Specifically, coaches appeared to discuss perceived competence in association with positive working environments, while a lack of autonomy and relatedness linked to factors associated with a negative working environment. This finding supports recent research by Stebbings, Taylor, Spray, and Ntoumanis (2012), which revealed that the extent to which coaches' psychological needs were supported or thwarted in their work environment was associated with coach psychological 'ill-being'.

Factors identified in the current studies align with previously cited stressors and factors that contribute to burnout (e.g., Chroni et al., 2013; Lundkvist et al., 2012). However, in the current study, coaches did not specifically cite stress as a reason for their transition. This suggests that coaches may be transitioning before the demands result in levels of perceived stress that are too high or that their decisions are not always underpinned by negative reasons, as indicated by the identification of positive factors that influence coaching transitions. However, caution should be noted when considering perceived positive factors, such as a move to work with better athletes or staying in a position due to success because such extrinsic motives have actually been associated with coaches leaving the profession if these outcomes are not realized (Sisley et al., 1990). Thus, it would appear pertinent that practitioners work with coaches to ensure that, in addition to extrinsic motives for moving to or staying in, they also have more intrinsic motives that can buffer any potential negative consequences of not realizing outcomes.

Career progression and development is important to retention in all professions (Kelloway & Day, 2005). It is not surprising that ambitious coaches will start in appropriately challenging positions, possibly as assistant coaches, and possibly in smaller or less complex organizations and institutions. Consistent with the suggestions of Self-Determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and Competence Motivation Theory (Harter, 1987), individuals are motivated to seek out optimally challenging tasks which enable them to demonstrate competence and subsequently grow and develop. Thus, organizations should expect this to be the case, and should manage their coaching staff accordingly. High turnover is undesirable in organizations (Cuskelly, 2004; O'Connor & Bennie, 2006; Raedeke et al., 2002), and for athlete development (Jowett & Poczwardowski, 2004). However, skilled and knowledgeable supervisors or athletic directors can create opportunities for positive career development by focusing their programs, and managing their staff in consideration of career objectives

(Dawson & Phillips, 2013). Larger organizations could also play an important role in developing coaching in their fields by providing assistant coach and other lower level positions, which they will expect developing coaches to move through on their way to positions of more responsibility. It is anticipated that transitions due to career progression, rather than out of a negative environment, would be associated with fewer negative outcomes. However, practitioners might still need to be aware of the potential challenges that could arise from developing new relationships with athletes and parents, and with colleagues and supervisors. Even if a move is for a perceived positive reason, there is no guarantee the new environment will match expectations.

Much attention has been paid to burnout among coaches (Goodger et al., 2009), but less to factors influencing transitions. In addition to factors expected to relate to transitions, such as dissatisfaction with the current position, the role of career goals was also revealed. Specifically, characteristics of coach environments that entice coaches to make upward transitions included organizational prestige, organizational stability, support from the organization, level of competition, and salary. Organizations and institutions interested in creating excellent programs may want to pay attention to these factors in creating a positive and attractive environment for career coaches. Future research should focus on how to enhance these aspects, and how to do so while also creating transitional positions to contribute to coach and sport development.

The current study provides an in-depth examination of coach transitions that offers several tangible avenues for applied implementation and future research. However, some limitations to consider include the single point-of-contact interviews with participants, the retrospective nature of data collection, and the arguably small number of transitions coaches had experienced (many had only experienced one major transition). It is also possible that the

1 samples are biased given that the Study 1 sample was a subset of volunteers from a previous
2 study who were interested in more research, and Study 2 was a purposively selected sample.

3 Given the limitations in the current study, future research could consider a
4 longitudinal approach to data collection, which considers coaches' experiences before, during,
5 and after transitions. Further, given the varying factors underpinning coach transitions, it
6 would be pertinent to examine the effect transitions underpinned by different reasons have on
7 coaches' affective outcomes. For example, are coach transitions that are motivated by intrinsic
8 rather than extrinsic reasons associated with more positive affective outcomes? Similarly, are
9 transitions stimulated by career advance associated with more positive outcomes than
10 transitions that result from a desire to leave a negative work environment? Finally, a more
11 extensive examination of the types of transitions coaches might experience would be
12 beneficial. That is, within this study coaches mentioned a variety of transitions including
13 between coaching positions, between coaching and administrative positions, and out of
14 coaching entirely. An examination and subsequent comparison of the factors that are
15 consistent and different between these transitions would provide pertinent insights into this
16 topic.

17 Overall, the current results offer promising future directions for sports organizations to
18 consider in preventing unwanted and unplanned coach transitions, and encouraging job
19 satisfaction in coaches. In turn, armed with an appreciation of why coaches' transition,
20 practitioners could play a critical role in supporting personnel within organizations as they
21 strive to make organizational and personal changes to be better able to meet the needs of their
22 coaches.

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- 1 Table 1.
- 2 Study 1 Results

Higher-order themes	Lower-order themes
Interpersonal Considerations	Relationships with supervisor and colleagues Relationships with athletes and parents
Work Demands	Workload Work type Balancing family and coaching commitments
Career Concerns	Job security Compensation Opportunities for career advancement
Positive Coaching Experiences	Enjoying the process of coaching Achieving success in a position

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- 1 Table 2.
- 2 Study 2 Results

Higher-order themes	Lower-order themes
Seeking opportunities to be more successful or achieve more success	Access to resources Enhanced support from supervisors and others in the organization Better compensations
Leaving a negative or challenging work environment	Inadequate support from supervisors and other coaches Negative relationships with athletes and athletes' parents Balance between workload and compensation

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